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“Beyond Victims and Perpetrators: Women Terrorists Tell Their Own Stories.”

Jamie Trnka

DEFENDING THE HOMELAND

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON RADICALISM, TERRORISM, AND STATE RESPONSES

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PART II - INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The idea for this book originated when we began reviewing submitted papers for the 2005 Senator Rush D. Holt History Conference at West Virginia University. Our theme for the conference, Defining Security in an Insecure World, invited a wide spectrum of research pertaining to terrorism, radicalism, and national security issues. While the conference itself produced a variety of excellent presentations, some of the scholarship stood out and, we felt, deserved a broader audience than the occupants of a few small conference rooms. The expanded papers included in this volume offer a fitting representation of the spirit of the conference itself and, hopefully, will become a welcome addition to the ever-expanding body of literature on terrorism and national security. Throughout the process of writing, researching, and editing, we have been exceedingly fortunate to receive a great deal of invaluable assistance. We would like to thank Pat Conner, Than Saffel, and Sara Pritchard at the West Virginia University Press. Our thanks also go out to Robert Blobaum, chair of the Department of History at West Virginia University; Steve Zdatny; Ronald L. Lewis; Ken Fones-Wolf; Ken Sullivan, executive director of the West Virginia Humanities Council; Eugene Vansickle; Katharine Antolini; Mark Myers; Mike Buseman; Rudolph Almasy and the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences; and, of course, the hard work and patience of all our contributors.

C. Belmont Keeney and Melinda M. Hicks

women turned to violence in order to achieve political and revolutionary ends.

Josh Arinze argues that in Nigeria, terrorism has assumed a different face: that of radical Islamic law. In a nation where the population of Christians and Muslims is roughly equal, the replacement of secular laws with sharia, a form of extreme Islamic fundamentalism, has pitted Christians against Muslims and resulted in state-sponsored terrorism. In the final essay, Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon assumes the difficult task of defining terrorism itself as a unique form of violence. This essay also examines the difficulties that arise when a nation's antiterrorist tactics closely resemble that of the terrorist groups it attempts to eliminate. Fitzgibbon traces the changing definition of terrorism over time and discusses growing similarities between the violent actions of terrorist groups and nation states.

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BEYOND VICTIMS AND PERPETRATORS:

WOMEN TERRORISTS TELL THEIR OWN STORIES

Jamie H. Trnka

GENDER AND SEXUALITY were among the most powerful signifiers of terrorist violence in the West German periodical press throughout the 1970s. Media outlets spoke of an "excess of women's liberation" as responsible for the rise of terrorism, a sentiment echoed by some government officials.[1] Terrorists, on the other hand, sought to represent the state itself as marked by violent excess. Insisting on the political quality of social violence understood in its broadest possible terms, they too deployed the language of gender and sexuality to these ends. First-person accounts by women once active in terrorist organizations introduce significant formal and epistemological variation in their choice of expressive genre and articulation of personal and collective political subjects, but they also continue to rely heavily on contemporary discourses of sexuality and violence. Ranging from traditionally structured confessional narratives, to

1 Günter Nollau, Chief of Constitutional Protection, cited in "Gespräch mit Inge Viett," *Die Zeit*, April 4, 1997: 15. In the same document, state officials also refer to a "new girl-militancy" and even "lesbian sponti-militants who scorned the state as an instrument of oppression." See also the state's official *Der Baader-Meinhof-Report. Aus den Akten des Bundeskriminalamts, der "Sonderkommission Bonn" und des Bundesamts für Verfassungsschutz* (Mainz, 1972). All translations are my own.

collaborative narratives and interviews, to participation in documentary film, these accounts have received even less critical attention than media (re)presentations of terrorism, themselves more often invoked than investigated.

I explore how gendered and sexualized images of violence in popular media and personal accounts rely on different but reconcilable assumptions about the relationship of women to the state and to political power. These (re)presentations played and continue to play a constitutive role in popular understandings of West German terrorists, including the Red Army Faction—popularly referred to as the Baader-Meinhof Gang—and the Movement Second June.[2] It is therefore important to explore the terms of their construction and circulation in public debate, including terms of representation that link women's political participation, sexuality, and violence in highly charged discussions of terrorism. It is equally important to draw attention to how disparate memories alternately identify terrorists and the state as perpetrators and victims of violence, obscuring in the process the violent deaths both of individuals targeted by terrorists and casualties of state agents in their hunt for terrorist suspects and suppression of

2 Most notably, popular film and artistic retrospective have shaped public discussion and consumption of images of the RAF, but so too has pop cultural marketing of terrorist logos under the rubric of "Prada Meinhof." On the most recent wave of filmic (re)presentations, see especially my article "'The struggle is over, the wounds are open': Cinematic Tropes, History, and the RAF in Recent German Film," forthcoming in *New German Critique* 101; Nora Alter, "Framing Terrorism: Beyond the Borders," *Projecting History: German Nonfiction Cinema, 1967–2000*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2002), 43–76; Thomas Elsaesser, "Antigone Agonistes: Urban Guerilla or Guerilla Urbanism? The Red Army Faction," *Germany in Autumn* and *Death Game*; Joan Copjec and Michael Sorkin, eds., *Giving Ground: The Politics of Propinquity* (London and New York: Verso, 1999), 267–302; and Petra Kraus, Natalie Lettenewitsch, Ursula Saekel, Brigitte Bruns, and Matthias Mersch, eds., *Deutschland im Herbst. Terrorismus im Film*, Schriftreihe Münchener Filmzentrum (Munich: Münchner Filmzentrum, 1997). The Institute for Social History has documented responses to the Berliner Kunsthalle's recent, highly controversial exhibit of art inspired by the RAF. See http://www.zeitgeschichte-online.de/md=RAF. On "Prada Meinhof," see the March 2002 *Tussi Deluxe*; Wiebke Brauer, "Tanz den Baader-Meinhof!" *Spiegel Online*, March 5, 2001, http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/gesellschaft/0,1518,120905,00 .html; and Coco Drilo, "Das RAF-Mode-Phantom," [April 2001] March 6, 2002, http://www.salonrouge.de/raf-hype2.html.

so-called sympathizers. By breaking the opposition State-Terrorist, I hope to expand the conceptual space available to casualties, those who survive them, and the role of the West German public itself in both the 1970s and the continuing production of memories about the decade.

The analytic pairing of media- and self-(re)presentations of terrorism serves to draw attention to the processes and implications of how we portray, and thus on what terms we engage with, political violence. By exploring a range of (re)presentations produced by subjects occupying radically different political positions, it is possible to ask what cultural labor different kinds of (re)presentations perform at the hands of different political subjects. As Rita Felski has noted in her work on women's autobiography, the medium and process of writing can come to undermine the authority of the real as much as the real intrudes on written representation. In a field of symbolic and necessarily mediated acts as complex as terrorism, I have no pretense of accessing such a reality, but rather have a more limited interest in what claims to do so suggest about both media and self-(re)presentations of women's political violence.[3]

As a critical counterpoint to popular, masculinist (re)presentations of women's participation in political violence, I bring the recent autobiographical account of former terrorist Margrit Schiller to bear on discourses of terrorism, sexuality, and women's political action more generally.[4]

3 With this point I wish to underscore that in referencing self-(re)presentations, I understand first-person accounts of these women's experiences not as historical fact, but, in keeping with Joan W. Scott's classic essay on experience, both interpretive acts and themselves in need of interpretation. What is more, the truth-content of these and other West German state, media, and terrorist accounts will remain largely unverifiable so long as much government documentation remains unavailable to the public, and existing documentation (for example, regarding conditions of imprisonment) remains extremely contradictory and therefore controversial. That being said, the reported experience of sexual intimidation, innuendo, and slander must be taken seriously as such. I do not consider careful analysis of the language and strategies of sex, violence, and politics to detract from the lived experiences of women terrorists; on the contrary, I hope through such analysis to better understand it.

4 Margrit Schiller: (b.1948) 1970–71: Social work with heroine addicts and loose affiliation with the Socialist Patients Collective. 1971–79: RAF member. During that time, Schiller served two years, eleven months (in two separate terms) for forgery and weapons possession. 1985–91: Cuban exile. 1992: Brief return to Germany. 1993–present: Uruguay.

Neither she nor other women terrorists who wrote autobiographical texts in the 1990s (such as Irmgard Möller and Inge Viett[5]) ascribe a specifically feminist, gendered, or sexually libratory character to any of their violent acts; the experience of violence, and the experience of being a woman, is markedly different in each of their accounts.[6] There is no consensus at the most basic level in their understandings of the politics of autobiography nor in their retrospective conceptualizations of the subject of their histories. Schiller's "I" is movingly personal and self-reflexive without any diminution of political solidarity among the individuals she describes; Möller rejects a singular subject altogether; Viett alone tells her story from childhood to narrative present, providing the most traditionally structured subject.[7]

5 Inge Viett: (b.1944) 1969: Became integrated into West Berlin subculture. 1972–80: Membership in Movement Second June, which dissolved and integrated into the RAF in 1980. Arrested in 1972 and again in 1975, Viett broke out of prison both times. In 1982, she left the RAF and went into hiding in the GDR. Arrested in 1990 and sentenced to thirteen years prison, she was released in 1997.

6 Irmgard Möller: (b.1947): Möller became active politically in 1967 and joined the RAF in 1971. She served twenty-two years in prison for terrorist activities, and was released in 1994. Möller is the only survivor of the so-called 'Death Night' of October 18, 1977 in Stuttgart's Stammheim prison, when Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, and Jan-Carl Raspe were found dead under mysterious circumstances. She sustained extensive stab wounds.

7 Margrit Schiller, *»Es war ein harter Kampf um meine Erinnerung« Ein Lebensbericht aus der RAF*, Jens Mecklenburg, ed. (Hamburg: Konkret Literatur Verlag: 1999); Irmgard Möller and Oliver Tollmein, *»RAF—Das war für uns Befreiung« Ein Gespräch mit Irmgard Möller über den bewaffneten Kampf, Knast und die Linke* (Hamburg: Konkret Literatur Verlag, 1997); Inge Viett, *Einsprüche. Briefe aus dem Gefängnis* (Hamburg: Edition Nautilus, 1996) and *Nie war ich furchtloser* (Hamburg: Edition Nautilus, 1996). The list of women terrorists' accounts could be expanded to include Birgit Hogefeld, *Ein ganz normales Verfahren . . . Prozeßerklärungen, Briefe und Texte zur Geschichte der RAF*, Mit einem Vorwort von Christian Ströbele (Berlin and Amsterdam: Edition ID-Archiv, 1996); Astrid Proll, *Hans und Grete. Die RAF 1967–1977* (Göttingen: Steidel, 1998); and Gabrielle Rollnick's book-length interview with Daniel Dubbe, *Keine Angst vor niemand. Über die Siebziger, die Bewegung 2. Juni und die RAF* (Hamburg: Edition Nautilus, 2003). Accounts by men feature differently constituted subjects that fall outside of the scope of this paper; despite the fact that the majority of West German terrorists in the 1970s were women, male terrorist accounts began to emerge significantly

Despite terrorist women's different assumptions about and conditions of autobiographical production, the importance of reading their life narratives together with popular texts that were widely distributed at the time of their active participation in terrorism should not be underestimated. As I have already asserted, the images of terrorism contemporary to terrorist violence in the 1970s continue to inform popular memory and understandings of women and terrorism in Germany. In this sense, my argument is not *about* the 1970s, even as it draws extensively on material from that period.

Let me move to the images themselves. For the purposes of this study, I focus specifically on photographic (re)presentations of women terrorists in my media analysis. The strategic linking of women's political involvement to lesbianism and aggressive heterosexuality and terrorism at play in these images creates a complex system of socially devalued behaviors, in which each element contributed to the delegitimization and criminaliza-

earlier, most notably with Michael "Bommi" Bauman's first banned, now classic *Wie alles anfing* [1975]. Mit einem Vorwort von Heinrich Böll und einem Nachwort von Michael Sontheimer (Berlin: Rotbuch Verlag, 1991). The relations among sex, violence, and politics is largely absent from men's accounts, which are structured along the lines of more traditional political and historical chronologies. Instructively, the question of propriety has been central to Viett's story. Like many crafters of life narrative, Viett clearly understood the process of autobiographical telling to be one of taking charge, of presenting a true account rooted in the authority of personal experience (*Nie war ich fürchtloser*, 8). Director Volker Schlöndorff's feature film *Die Stille nach dem Schuss* [*Legends of Rita*] (2001) makes liberal use of material from Viett's own biography. According to him, "I made sure that Inge Viett saw the film before the Berlinale. And then she said she wanted to take legal measures against it, because it's her story. It never came to that, because there are no legal grounds for a suit. When one gets so mixed up in German history as she did, one can't be prissy about it when history strikes back . . . She would have preferred the film not be made. She doesn't accuse the film of being her life, but of not being enough like her life. But we didn't want to tell a 'true story.' A feature film is always fiction, even if I say ten times it was really like that" (Schlöndorff in Daniela Sannwald, "'Die Stille nach dem Schuss.' Frauen sind die besseren Terroristen [Interview]. Politik als Liebesgeschichte: Ein Gespräch mit dem Filmemacher Volker Schlöndorff," *Der Tagesspiegel Online Dienste*, September 13, 2000, http://195.170.124.152/archiv/2000/09/12/ak-ku-fi-14250.html). Because of Schlöndorff's film, Viett's story has received significantly more media attention than the others.

tion of the others. All of the images I discuss appeared repeatedly and in a wide range of papers, in association with a wide range of different events and stories.[8]

Women's participation in radical politics was frequently represented in sexualized terms well before the formation of terrorist groups; its roots run deep in the public imagination. By far the most familiar image of Andreas Baader[9] and Gudrun Ensslin[10] shows them some two years before the formation of the RAF, seated together with their arms over one another's shoulders at their 1968 Frankfurt arson trial, laughing and looking into one another's eyes. Baader is holding a book with its title just visible enough: the Marquis de Sade's *Josephine*.[11] A series of articles published in the boulevard paper *Bild* immediately after Baader's arrest focused primarily on his relationship to Ensslin and included photographs of the two in the courtroom and in bed, making clear the media's obsessive association between political and sexual behavior. In Baader and Ensslin, the media took full advantage of the opportunity to market sex images; sex

8 Earlier versions of this work were presented at the 2003 Modern Language Association as part of broader analyses of terrorist images in the print media presented in 2000 at the annual conference "Rethinking Marxism," as well as at the Cornell University Visual Culture Colloquium. "Women's Sexuality and Radical Politics in Popular Accounts of Terrorist Violence," Women in German, MLA Convention, San Diego, December 27, 2003; "Envisioning Terror: Terrorism, Public Spectacle, and Print Media in West Germany of the 1970s," Rethinking Marxism, University of Massachussetts, Amherst, September 24, 2000.

9 Andreas Baader: (1947–1977) 1970: Founding member of the RAF. The group's popular name—'Baader-Meinhof'—derives from the group's formation around his 'liberation' from prison, in which Meinhof was complicit. At the time, he was serving a sentence for arsons committed to protest the Vietnam War, together with Gudrun Ensslin, Thorwald Proll, and Horst Söhnlein, in Frankfurt 1968. Arrested June 1972. Baader was found dead in his prison cell on October 18, 1977.

10 Gudrun Ensslin: (1940–1977): Founding member of the RAF. As a student, Ensslin was active in pacifist and anti-nuclear movements before turning to violent political action around 1967/68. Arrested June 1972. Ensslin was found hanged in her prison cell on October 18, 1977.

11 Matthew Todd Grant elaborates on the significance of "Sadean excess" in visions of the RAF; see "Critical Intellectuals in the New Media: Bernward Vesper, Ulrike Meinhof, the Frankfurt School and the Red Army Faction," Ph.D. diss.: Cornell University, 1994, 202–04.

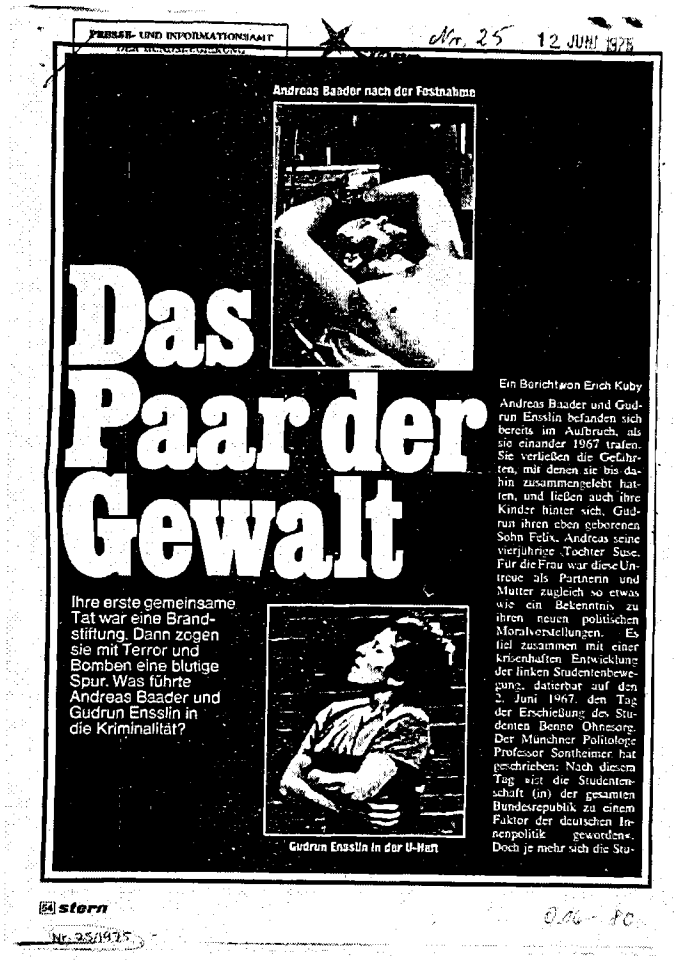


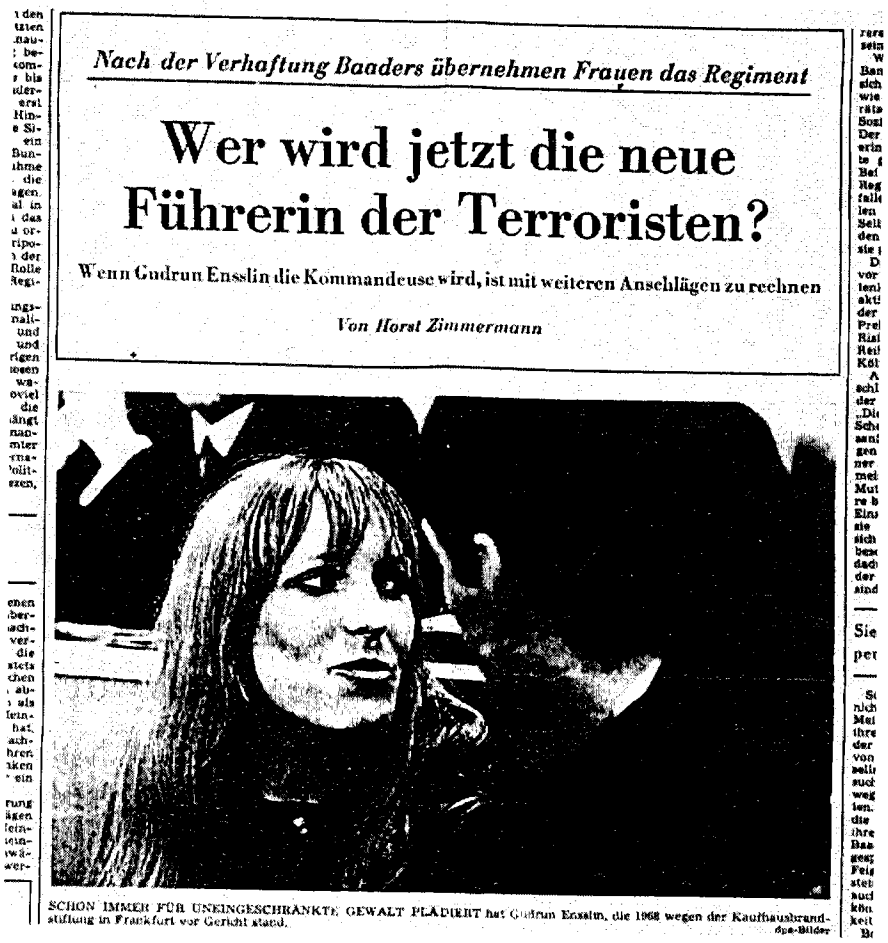
Figure 1 "The Violent Couple," *Stern*, June 12, 1975.

sells better than politics, which is to say that politics sells better disguised as sex.[12] (See fig. 1)

The pairing of Baader and Meinhof[13] as sexually involved draws more on the RAF's popular name than on any substantive physical relation-

12 See Grant, "Critical Intellectuals," 201–02, for similar arguments.

13 Ulrike Meinhof: (1934–1976): Well-known political journalist and co-editor for the leftist magazine *konkret*. Meinhof was active in pacifist and anti-nuclear movements and advocated for social welfare reforms in the FRG prior to her terrorist activity.



Nach der Verhaftung Baaders übernehmen Frauen das Regiment

Wer wird jetzt die neue Führerin der Terroristen?

Wenn Gudrun Ensslin die Kommandeuse wird, ist mit weiteren Anschlägen zu rechnen

Von Horst Zimmermann

SCHON IMMER FÜR UNEINGESCHRÄNKTE GEWALT PLÄDIERT hat Gudrun Ensslin, die 1968 wegen der Kaufhausbrandstiftung in Frankfurt vor Gericht stand.

Figure 2 Headline reads: "Who will be the new lady leader of the terrorists now? After Baader's arrest, the women take over the regiment. If Gudrun Ensslin becomes the commander, further attacks are expected." Photo caption reads: "Gudrun Ensslin has always advocated wanton violence" (*Münchener Merkür*, June 7, 1972).

ship between the two. Nonetheless, their hypothetical involvement was described as the source of tensions between Ensslin and Meinhof. These tensions were supposedly augmented by intellectual egoism, with the media often observing that, were it not for Meinhof, the RAF would be

Founding member of the RAF. Arrested June 1972. Found hanged in her prison cell, May 9, 1976.

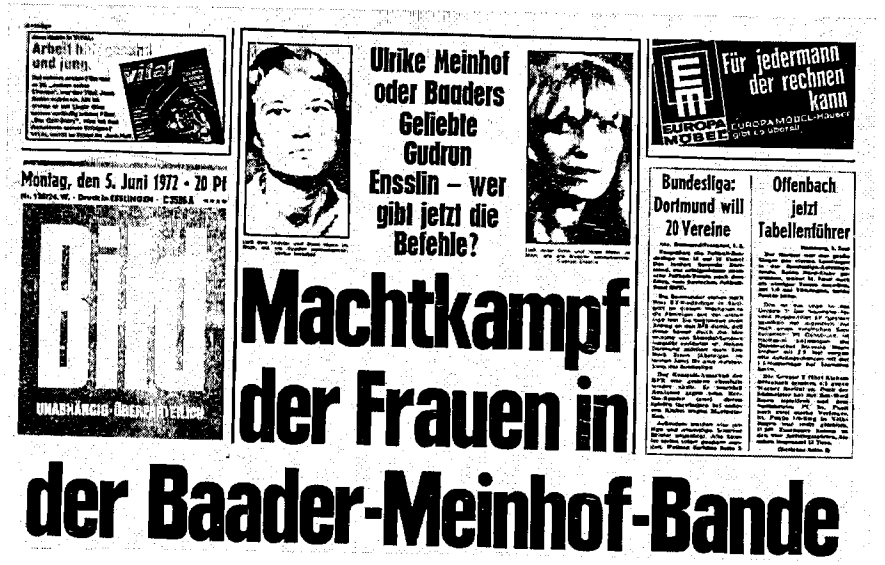


Figure 3 Headline reads: "Power struggle between the women in the Baader-Meinhof Gang. Ulrike Meinhof or Baader's lover Gudrun Ensslin—who gives the orders now?" The (very misleading) photo captioning is strikingly parallel, establishing a struggle for political leadership as a struggle over a man: "Abandoned her daughters and husband when she met Baader: Ulrike Meinhof" and "Abandoned her husband and son when she met Baader: Gudrun Ensslin" (*Bild Zeitung*, June 5, 1972).

the Baader-Ensslin Gang. In an article following Baader's arrest, "Power Struggle between the Women in the Baader-Meinhof Gang,"[14] these alleged tensions were used to portray the women as engaged in a petty and personal rather than political struggle for control. Perhaps more importantly, sexually pairing Baader and Meinhof enabled the media to avoid describing them as political partners.[15] (See fig. 2–3.)

14 "Machtkampf der Frauen in der Baader-Meinhof Bande," *Bild Zeitung*, May 5, 1972.

15 It is an unfortunate fact that academic investigations into Red Army Faction terrorism uncritically reinforce the conflation of sexual and political couplings in the RAF. Jeremy Varon's *Bringing the War Home* provides a textbook visualization of the three, in which photos of Meinhof and Ensslin are positioned to gaze at a brooding Baader, who looks away from them both (*Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies* [Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2004]). For this example, I thank Andrew

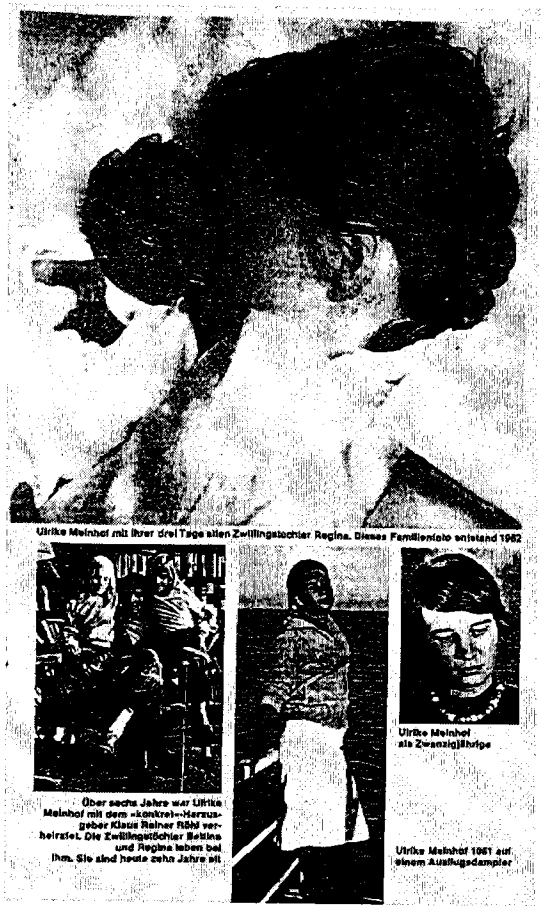


Figure 4a This photo collage appeared in *Stern* June 25, 1972. Meinhof especially was portrayed through what I call the "family album approach," with emphasis on the career woman who had it all but became too politically involved for her own good. The images combine the "family album" with a visualization of terrorism as degeneration from "sweet child" to "marked criminal."

The women of the terrorist group had, however, not always been "sexually deviant" in the media's own terms. Ensslin, whose father was a pastor, was portrayed as a fallen angel of sorts, often referred to as "the pastor's daughter" when she wasn't simply "the Baader-Girlfriend"; Meinhof was portrayed as the woman who had it all—a glamorous career as a journalist, a family, a suburban mansion—and threw it all away because she was too politically engaged for her own good. Hypersexuality is invoked here not as the cause of radical politics, a dubious enough claim, but rather as its symptom. Ironically, the warning voice of the press cautioned against the

Oppenheimer. In an academic climate that, since September 11, 2001, has deemed terrorism a "sexy" topic, sex and violence threaten to become disconcertingly blurred. A detailed analysis of the phenomenon remains the stuff of another article.

Figure 4b Figures 4b through Figure 7 all appeared as part of the *Quick* magazine series "Ulrike Meinhof and her Cruel Girls," June 28, 1972.

social and moral dangers of terrorism at the same time as it marketed its own highly sexualized images of the terrorists. (See figs. 4-7.)

In stark contrast to these portrayals of terrorists, the media sometimes imaged them as stereotypically androgynous, hinting at queer sexuality. Ensslin, for example, is alternately described as "the torch" (a reference to her involvement in arsons as well as to her supposed sexual insatiability) and as flat-chested, stringy-haired, and possessed of an unparalleled masculine militancy and capacity to dominate. A series of three photos of Ensslin, published in *Der Spiegel,* illustrates these different but related portrayals of Ensslin in the popular press. (See fig. 8.)

The pictures are arranged vertically, one above the other. In the first picture, Ensslin has short-cropped hair and looks androgynous. In the second,

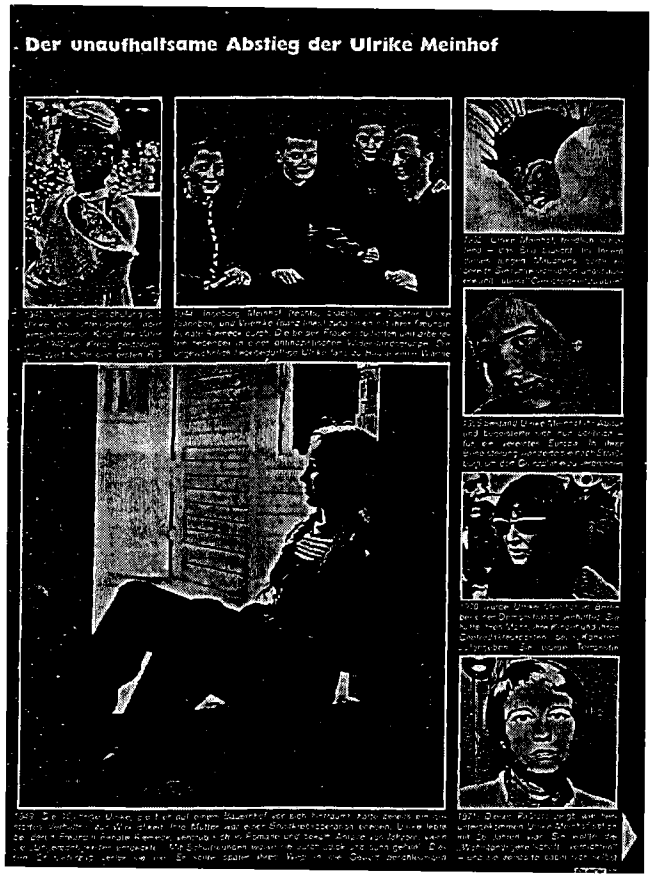


Figure 5 "The unstoppable decline of Ulrike Meinhof"

her hair is long and hangs loose around her shoulders. She is wearing lipstick, and her cheekbones are highlighted dramatically. In the final picture, taken after Ensslin's arrest, she is smoking, her hair has been dyed black and is uncombed, and she is staring blankly into a corner of her dark cell.[16] Similar images combining androgyny or masculinity, heterosexuality and stereotypical feminine beauty, and dark criminality are deployed in various (re)presentations of all of the female terrorists.

While these seemingly different images and the ideologies that inform them are depicted sequentially in this example, my point is that through their frequent repetition, they served to reinforce a cumulative effect on

16 Grant also analyzes these images, describing them as a life chronology (i.e., discrete moments or stages in Ensslin's development taken from the years 1963, 1968, and 1972) rather than a composite image (189).

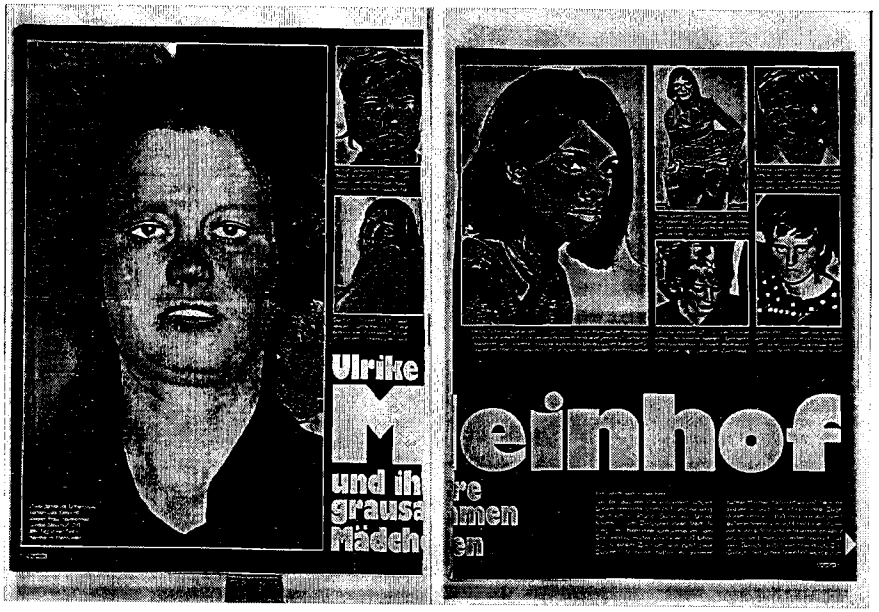


Figure 6 Captions include: "Two years underground have left their mark on this woman's face" and "Gudrun Ensslin was sexually unsatisfied. In 1969 the pastor's daughter acted in a porn film." Other photos and captions depict Petra Schelm, who was killed by police in July 1971 after she supposedly got involved with the wrong man and, through him, with terrorism. Schelm joined the RAF from the ranks of the broad, West German extra-parliamentary opposition in 1970. She was shot dead by police during the first massive terrorist manhunt in July of the following year. Also pictured: Irene Georgens with her legs spread apart. Georgens first met Meinhof during the journalist's research on foster care facilities. She was active in the RAF from its inception until 1972, when she was arrested and convicted for bank robbery.

the public conscious—an effect that could be described as the trace of an absent referent. What is more, the *composite* image of the RAF suggests the possibility of a subjectivity at once hetero- and homosexual, ugly and beautiful, and politically engaged enough to put one's body at stake in opposition to the democratic German state: a terrifying and destabilizing combination.

The autobiographies that I consider assume a fundamentally different relationship of author, text, and audience: refusing to present either a superficial or a psychologized image of violence, they claim to present authoritative and authentic accounts of women's participation in terrorism and appeal to the reader to locate their political actions within a larger

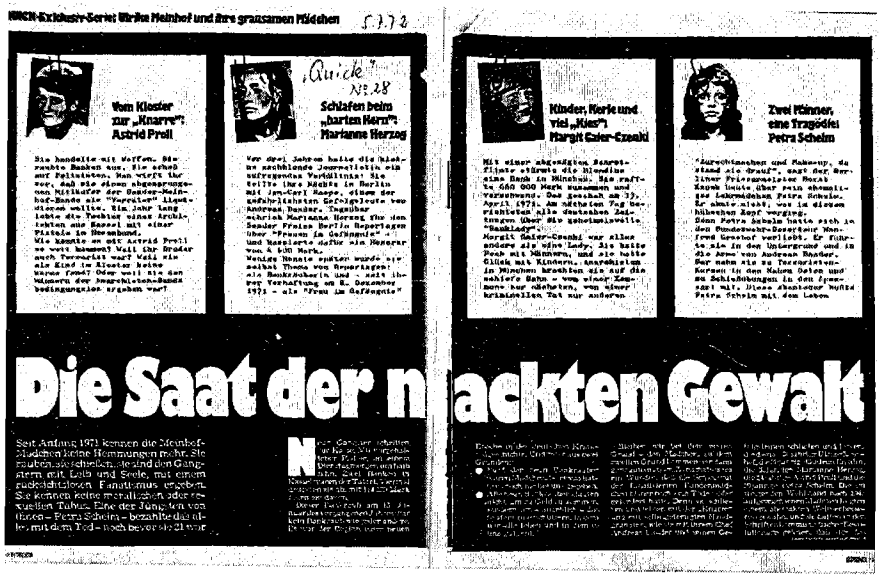


Figure 7: Headline: "Sowing naked violence" (*Quick*, July 5, 1972). Paperclipped photos and type suggest the authority of police investigative files. Captions include: "They are gangsters with body and soul" and "They know no moral or sexual taboos."

social context that is itself fundamentally characterized by violence, with particular attention to violence against women. Their terrorist acts are, of course, expressions of subjectivity in and of themselves; I choose to address their written self-expression because, like the examples from print media that I have drawn on here, they interpret rather than (re)present the terrorist act. Terrorism communicates through the disruption of public spectacle; at their most productive moments, first-person narratives of terrorism can challenge the spectacle that the (re)presentation of such disruptions itself so often becomes.[17]

17 Arlene A. Teraoka describes terrorism as "an extreme mode of communication" (211) and offers insightful analysis of Ulrike Meinhof's essays and collectively authored RAF communiqués; see "Terrorism and the Essay: The Case of Ulrike Meinhof," *The Politics of the Essay: Feminist Perspectives*, ed. Ruth-Ellen Boetcher Joeres and Elizabeth Mittmann (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993): 208–24. Space dictates that I refrain from a more detailed explication of the rhetoric of terrorism here. My understanding of terrorism as the disruption of public spectacle draws primarily on Guy Debord. His influential *Society of the Spectacle* (1967; trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith [New York: Zone Books, 1995]) emphasizes that spectacle consists not of images

Of the first-person narratives in question, Margrit Schiller's appropriation of the traditionally bourgeois literary form of autobiography lends itself especially well to an analysis of how gender and sexuality are deployed as narrative and rhetorical—that is, not exclusively experiential—categories. With patient, steady self-reflexivity, the political and social significance that she ascribes to elements of her story as a woman and as a terrorist are more explicitly available to the reader in her autobiography than in Möller's or Viett's. (This is largely because it is not shaped by the kind of collaborative (auto)biographical practice that informs their narratives.)

Multiple examples show how Schiller both deploys the categories of sexuality and gender *and* resists the sexualization of her body and political activity in order to refocus attention on the sexual nature of state violence. For instance, she provides a detailed account of her forced press appearance after her first arrest, comparing her treatment to that of a hunting trophy, carried by police, her skirt hitched up, her head held toward the cameras.[18] (See Fig. 9.)

Her account describes a sexualized hunt that took allegedly lascivious women for prey. Ironically, she suggests, her transformation into the sexualized object of the media's gaze should be read as a culmination of the sexual accouterments of her most recent underground disguise: Schiller took on her feminine garb in an effort to evade recognition. She describes in detail the process of making herself up as "feminine," concluding: "I felt costumed, but the search descriptions said that I only ever wore long pants."[19] At the time of her arrest, her sexual persona is not described as an authentic expression of her own sexuality or gender identity, but as a defensive/evasive response to the public gaze cast on another kind of sex-

themselves but of social relationships mediated by images. It should be understood as a "worldview transformed into an objective force" through image-relations (13). He points to what he identifies as the methodological necessity of analyzing the spectacle in its own language in order to "hasten its demise." This is largely what I mean when I point to the terrorists disruption of public spectacle as itself spectacular and yet fundamentally opposed to spectacle. Looking at West German terrorism in the '70s with an eye to these concepts is not only theoretically useful but also historically appropriate insofar as a number of terrorists were closely associated with Situationist groups before going underground.

18 Schiller, *»Es war ein harter Kampf um meine Erinnerung«*, 18.

19 Schiller, *»Es war ein harter Kampf um meine Erinnerung«*, 11.

Figure 8: *Der Spiegel*, June 25, 1972.

ual body. Forced by the manhunt to sexualize herself, that sexualization is used as a weapon against her by the very state and media authorities who, she says, made it necessary.

To a similar effect, Schiller recalls being forced to strip at the time of her second arrest:

> The entire stairwell was full of heavily armed police in protective clothing. I was the only woman. I had to stand naked in the middle of the stairs, surrounded by young policemen. When the initial tension began to dissipate, the pigs around me started to comment on my body. It was about half an hour before a ranking officer put a jacket on me. I felt utterly demeaned and humiliated.[20]

Schiller also describes repeated sexual intimidation by police, guards, and intelligence officers. First housed in a cloister that had been converted into a prison—"a fitting change," she recalls bitterly—she was later transferred to the threatening atmosphere of an all-male prison in dramatic opposition to her initial "cloistering."[21] These state actions are repeatedly framed as narratives of rape or the psychologically torturous effect of potential rape.

Sexualized state violence in sites and conditions of imprisonment finds its narrative corollary in the social violence of Adenauer Germany that Schiller ascribes to her family: her mother violently repressed Margrit's sexuality, beating the backs of her legs black and blue

20 Schiller, *»Es war ein harter Kampf um meine Erinnerung«*, 136.

21 Schiller, *»Es war ein harter Kampf um meine Erinnerung«*, 81, 83.

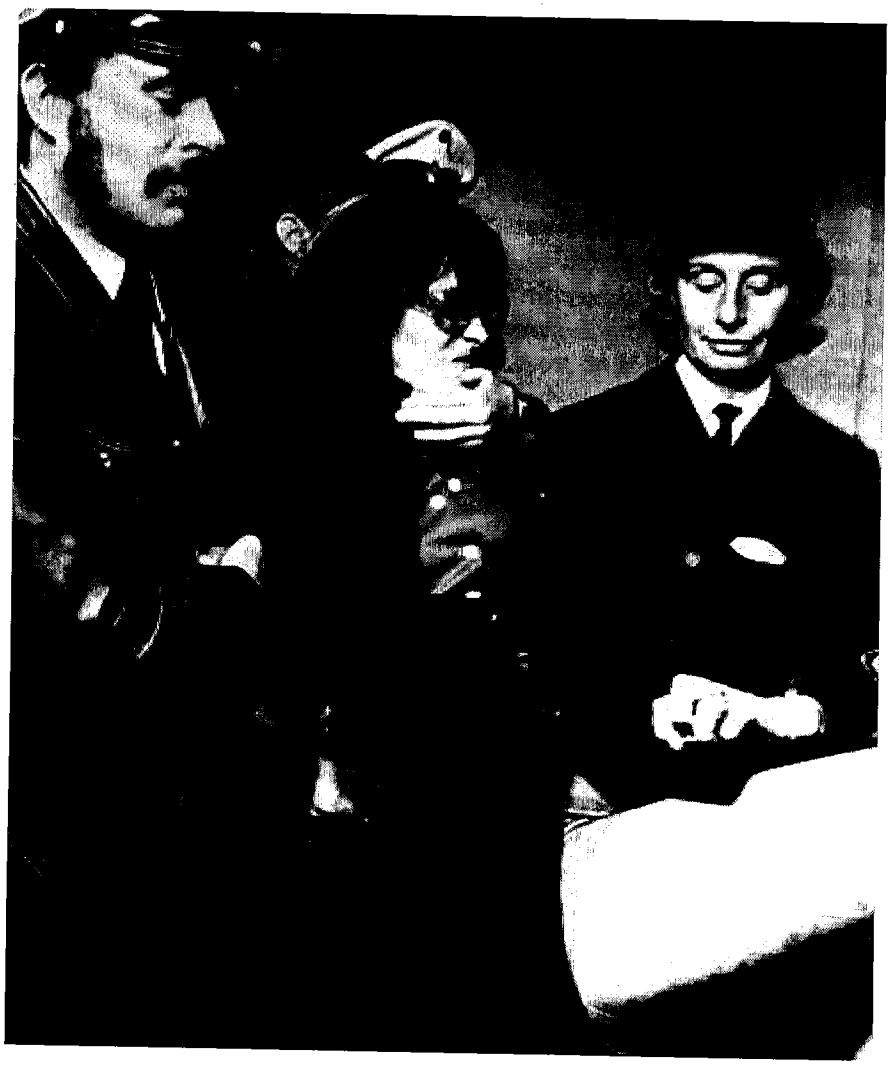


Figure 9: Police forcibly present Margrit Schiller to the press.

with knitting needles. What better metaphor for the gender role assigned her and the consequences of acting on heterosexual desire? Her father's authority is described in terms that suggest he created the threatening atmosphere of a men's prison in Schiller's own childhood bedroom.

By positioning herself as a victim of sexualized social and ultimately state violence, Schiller creates an *ex post facto* justification for terrorist vio-

lence even as she narrates away her own agency. This denial of agency exists in tension with a stated interest in using autobiography to reclaim repressed experience and memory, at least in part as a means of taking responsibility for her past actions without renouncing her participation in the RAF. As she employs them, categories and terms of gender and sexuality perform a profoundly destabilizing cultural labor in the history of political violence and its articulation in gendered terms in (West) Germany.

If subjectivity is produced as an effect of writing—that is, if it is not something stable that preexists the process of telling a life story—then writing away agency is an ironic reinscription of the woman terrorist as object, not only (and inevitably) of *self*-reflection, but of a haunting state and media gaze. She exists in tension between subject and object positions implied by the roles of life-author, perpetrator, and victim. Without addressing this tension, one cannot adequately address the question of responsibility that comes with subject-agency and is, in a legal, social, and ethical sense, a necessary precondition for understanding how, when, and why terror is enacted.

Whether or not Schiller and her fellow life-narrators see their own terrorist acts and affiliations as located within or significantly informed by a feminist politics, popular press accounts—which systematically linked women's political initiatives and violence—demand that we analyze all (re)presentations of women's political action—especially terrorism—in these terms. The basis for this link resides in a shared archive of gender (re)presentations across the popular and the personal. By reading women terrorists' stories as part of a longer tradition of confessional narrative, a preferred narrative form in mainstream feminist thought prominent in West Germany of the 1970s,[22] their reliance on gendered categories becomes more immediately apparent.

The conscious articulation of the personal and the political as critical epistemological categories in the West German (and, for that matter, large sectors of the U.S. American) feminist movement(s) in the 1970s is exem-

22 While the women terrorist texts under discussion at no point play with the boundaries of fictional protagonist, author, and narrator—a hallmark of women's literature so widely read and discussed at that time—they bear other important formal and thematic affinities to the phenomenon taken as a whole. An important exception might be the collaborative narratives of Astrid Proll and Katharina de Fries by Ulrike Edschmid, *Frau mit Waffe. Zwei Geschichten aus terroristischen Zeiten* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1996).

plified in confessional narrative.[23] If, with Felski, one asserts a strong relationship between confessional form and its social function, the cultural labor potentially performed in women terrorists' texts is diminished by the relative decline of supposed oppositional communities of readership.[24] Nonetheless, the strong thematic and organizational affinities among these texts (e.g., violation by people and institutions coded as masculine; participation of political and social opposition; extrapolation of familial to broader social-historical relationships) provide some useful insights into their construction. Composed by women who would have been familiar with confessional texts such as Verena Stefan's *Shedding* (1975) and Karin Struck's *Class Love* (1973), they approximate what Eva Keitel describes as "horizontal" relationships between confessional narratives.[25] The "vertical" or structural relationships emphasized vary more widely than might be expected: Schiller, affiliated with the Socialist Patients Collective in Heidelberg before joining the RAF, emphasizes the medical and psychological effects of capitalism; Viett implicitly addresses heteronormative and capitalist structures in relating her experiences as a young sex worker to later vandalism of bridal and porn shops. Feminist scholars, theorizing first-person life narratives in relation to Althusserian and Foucauldian theories of repressive and ideological state apparati, have explored the ways in which women subjects come to understand their social formation in, and through, life narration: "An ideological critique of her engagement in the state apparati is required to understand her own social formation, though such a critique will not undo it."[26] Unsuccessfully, some women subjects of the terrorist act attempt to do precisely that: to explode the physical representatives of social formation in a highly mediated, symbolic act that overreaches critique in a properly productive sense toward something like an undoing. At the risk of pushing the point to its conceptual limit, women terrorists' first-person narratives approximate the "horizontal," terrorism

23 Rita Felski, "On Confession" [1989], *Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader*, ed. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson (Madison: University of Wisconson Press, 1998), 83f, 92; Evelyne Keitel, "Verständigungstexte: Form, Funktion, Wirkung," *The German Quarterly* 56:3: 431f, 448.

24 Outlined by Keitel, "Verständigungstexte: Form, Funktion, Wirkung," 431, 448, and pasim.

25 Keitel, "Verständigungstexte: Form, Funktion, Wirkung," 432.

26 Smith and Watson, *Women, Autobiography, Theory*, 21.

the "vertical" axes of social analysis that Keitel (admittedly schematically) draws in her characterization of confessional narrative.[27]

The autobiographical turn in terrorist communication resumes and resists the rearticulation as "individual."[28] Schiller's titular struggle for personal memory (*"It was a hard battle for my memory": A Life Report from the RAF*) intones individual perspective without accepting the formally implied individuation of narrator as social subject. Accountability is conceived as personal, even when individual subjects are not named as such (for naming has legal, institutional consequences that can never be taken for granted in the context of these narratives);[29] personal histories, however, call out for collective reflection.[30] If feminist confessional, according to Felski and Keitel, represents a failure of intimacy,[31] terrorist confessions (in all of the word's dimensions) represent a failure of communication through the medium of terrorism itself.

Critics like Sigrid Weigel have rightly drawn attention to the aesthetic and political naïveté of the confessional genre;[32] nonetheless, I believe that this naïveté has to be read in tandem with politically calculating moments in autobiographical texts by authors like Schiller. Women terrorists explicitly state a desire to reinscribe themselves into history, to redefine *which* selves are visible (for example, writing the woman as object of state and social violence as well as the active perpetrator of violent acts). In the process, they mobilize categories of gender and sexual identity that had been the object of their own radical critique in the 1970s, albeit to different political ends than popular media deployments of those same categories. This should not be surprising. Since the 1970s, theorists of self-narration have repeatedly emphasized the epistemological limits of narrating

27 E.g., Keitel, "Verständigungstexte: Form, Funktion, Wirkung," 432.

28 See Smith and Watson, *Women, Autobiography, Theory*, on autobiography as an institution of individuation and interpellation: "For the Althusserian critique understood that 'individual' to be a function of ideology. Students of Althusser directed attention to the ways in which historically specific cultural institutions provide ready-made identities to subjects. 'Autobiography' becomes one such literary institution in the West. It has its tradition (or history); it participates in the economics of production and circulation; and it has its effects—that is, it functions as a powerful cultural site through which the 'individual' materializes" (21). Nonetheless, insofar as the RAF and Movement Second June insisted—and women terrorists' continue to insist—on a collective subject, individual voices resonate differently than many of the subjects considered by theorists of autobiography.

29 Schiller explains: "I think that with our struggle we took on a personal accountability. We stand by it by name. For the most part I name the real names of all the people who are known or dead. The unknown or unrecognized shall remain so: Bernd, Christiane, Christina, Ingrid and Stefan are invented names for people who are not invented" (*»Es war ein harter Kampf um meine Erinnerung«*, 4). Because criminal law is predicated on individual guilt, one of the best defenses of the terrorist suspect is to hold fast to a group identity. Schiller's gesture of renaming or even anonymous naming may be understood as an alternative narrative practice along a spectrum of individual juridical and collective political identifications. For example, the introduction of "crown witness" (*Kronzeuge*) legislation, in which suspects were offered substantial privileges and reduced sentencing in exchange for naming names, was integral to the criminal trial of terrorists, and Ulrike Meinhof described what she viewed as state strategies of "personalization" as fundamentally destructive to the collective in more than just evidentiary terms. By contrast, Schiller's first-person account walks a fine line between personal formation and accountability, and collective affinities (including political solidarities, friendships, and sexual relationships).

30 The metaphor of the mirror is intoned by both Jens Mecklenburg's foreword and Argentine author Osvaldo Bayer's afterword to Schiller's text. Möller identifies the problem of individual versus collective histories in explicitly generic terms, drawing attention to the narrative constraints of the one-on-one interview format of her own book, given the RAF's self-understanding as a collective (10).

31 According to Felski in "On Confession": "[T]he production of the text itself functions as an attempted compensation for this failure, generating in the relationship between the reader and author the erotic mutuality which cannot otherwise be realized. Writing, seemingly the most isolated of activities, becomes the means to the creation of an ideal intimacy. As [Judith] Offenbach notes of her own text [*Sonja* (1980)] the confession is a cry for love, allowing the author to express powerful emotional feelings to a reader without fear of rejection. The writing self is profoundly dependent upon the reader for validation, specifically the projected community of female readers who will understand, sympathize, and identify with the author's emotions and experiences" (89–90). Whether the feminist readership these critics posit as a condition for a politicized reception of confessional narrative still exists thirty years after the heyday of feminist confessional narrative is a question that, without more detailed research into reception, I am unprepared to answer.

32 Sigrid Weigel, "'Woman Begins Relating to Herself': Contemporary German Women's Literature (Part One)," *New German Critique* 31: 1984.

memory: "They may contest as well as accept the public rendering but must relate to it and negotiate it."[33] Reconceptualizations of confessional narrative in explicitly political terms by scholars like Felski and Keitel can help us to restate questions about the relationship between feminism and terrorism in media and autobiographical texts. Women and men, perpetrators and victims alike, draw on popular forms and myths in order to narrate their own life experiences.[34] If these categories of sexual and political violence and violation shaped the roles available to Schiller—and they were the predominant roles socially scripted at the time—we should ask what kind of alternate social visions one might work to produce in an effort to escape the material oppositions that constrain representation and, more importantly, lead some subjects to choose violence.[35] This is not a simple question, and the answer is bound to entail broad social change rather than a singular legislative or political intervention.

The material referents in and effects of terrorists' life narratives of course exceed the narrative structures populated by figurative women in the literary texts Felski and Keitel analyze. Nonetheless, the structures and communicative goals of confessional texts invite readers to reconsider the complex production and mediation of the terrorist spectacle in more widely circulated media. Both media and self-(re)presentations provide, to my mind, unsatisfactory accounts of women's participation in political violence, reaffirming an uneasy relationship between feminism and terrorism across a range of authors, texts, and textual forms. Read together,

33 Penny Summerfield, "Dis/composing the subject: Intersubjectivities in oral history," ed. Tess Cosslett, Celia Lury, and Penny Summerfield, *Feminism and Autobiography: Texts, Theories, Methods* (New York and London: Routledge, 2001), 91–106. See also Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

34 See for example Summerfield; M.-F. Chanfrault-Duchet, "Narrative Structures, Social Models and Symbolic Representation in the Life-story," *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, ed. S. B. Gluck and D. Patai (London: Routledge, 1991); and Luisa Passerini, "Women's Personal Narratives: Myths, Experiences and Emotions," *Interpreting Women's Lives: Feminist Theory and Personal Narratives*, Personal Narratives Group (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 189–97.

35 The perception of a choice between socially scripted roles is perhaps clearest not in Schiller but in Rollnick: "[Danial Dubbe]: You could have lived as a housewife with two children in Dortmund, too. [Rollnick]: No, never a housewife. The way it was, with all the mistakes, really was better" (*Keine Angst vor niemand*, 119).

media and self-(re)presentations at least begin to suggest a more complete view of a historical, discursive economy of images and narratives that collectively constitute a gendered epistemology of violence within which terrorism has been and continues to be understood.